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New York

President:	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Gallardo
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 30 of resolution 1546 (2004) (S/2006/706)

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06-52155 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 30 of resolution 1546 (2004) (S/2006/706)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq), took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Qazi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 30 of resolution 1546 (2004), contained in document S/2006/706.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, and by Mr. John Bolton, representative of the United States, on behalf of the multinational force.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

Mr. Qazi: The Secretary-General's report before the Security Council comes at a time when the challenges facing the Iraqi people have never appeared more daunting. As emphasized in the report,

> "the time has come for [Iraq's] constitutionally elected Government and the international community to place the safety and welfare of the Iraqi people at the front and centre of all their collective efforts" (*S/2006/706, para. 69*).

The key challenge to the Government of Iraq is to develop a truly national agenda that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all Iraqis. Prime Minister Al-Maliki has laid out a range of initiatives in his National Reconciliation Plan and has taken initial steps to broaden the basis of support for his Government and to increase the effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces. The Prime Minister has included the Baghdad peace initiative in his National Reconciliation Plan, which is aimed at establishing a basis for mutual trust and protection among Baghdad's diverse communities. It is also encouraging that the Government of Iraq is seeking to establish a dialogue with those who have hitherto remained outside the political process. Those initiatives merit the widest possible support.

Ultimately, lasting improvements in security can be achieved only through negotiated solutions to complex political, economic, social and religious issues that meet the legitimate needs and interests of all Iraqis.

Although Iraq's problems have been overshadowed in recent months by crises elsewhere in the region, Iraq today has become one of the most violent conflict areas in the world. As highlighted in the report, in many parts of the country insurgent, militia and terrorist attacks, as well as gross violations of human rights, have continued to inflict untold suffering, particularly on innocent civilians, most notably women, children and minorities. The Iraqi people have every right to expect their elected leaders to reverse those worrisome trends, which could endanger the social and political fabric of the country. Given Iraq's importance and potential, its neighbours

and the wider international community have a vital stake in helping Iraq become a peaceful, stable and prosperous partner, fully integrated within the region and the international community.

The International Compact with Iraq could become an important vehicle to that end. The Compact, co-chaired by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, is an initiative for a new partnership between Iraq and the international community. Considerable preparatory work has been initiated to create an effective framework for the Compact in which the Government can develop its economic programme according to clearly defined priorities, benchmarks and commitments.

At the preparatory meeting held in Abu Dhabi on 10 September, the Government of Iraq outlined the key priorities on which to form a Compact, such as effective public resource management and economic reform in private sector development and social sector reforms. The Government of Iraq also pledged its strong commitment to tackling corruption, creating a transparent and efficient oil sector, developing a solid budgetary framework, improving governance and building and consolidating effective national institutions. The Government recognized that good governance and the resolution of security and political challenges are interlinked and are prerequisites for progress in all other areas. Participants welcomed the commitments made by the Government and pledged their support to work closely with the Government of Iraq in further developing the Compact, with the assistance of the United Nations and the World Bank.

For its part, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) remains fully committed to support and facilitate the development of the Compact and to assist in its effective implementation. As the Council is aware, the Secretary-General has taken the initiative to convene a high-level meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 18 September which, in addition to reviewing progress in the implementation of resolution 1546 (2004), will review the development of the International Compact.

The commitments of the Government of Iraq to make urgent progress on national reconciliation, political inclusion and consensus-building, in addition to the Compact, also deserve the full support of the region and the wider international community. Fostering national reconciliation and building effective national institutions must be an Iraqi-led and Iraqi-owned process. As a key priority, Iraq's elected parliament, the Council of Representatives, will need to decide on a range of legislation to make substantial parts of Iraq's Constitution operational. It must also commence a constitutionally required review process to strengthen the Constitution as a document that reflects the national consensus.

The UNAMI Office of Constitutional Support has facilitated very considerable preparatory work for a constitutional review process through arranging several multi-party dialogues between Iraqi political representatives and constitutional experts, as well as international experts and consultants on key constitutional issues. I hope that a constitutional review will be used as a vehicle to promote national dialogue and reconciliation. Far from provoking controversy, a well-prepared and managed constitutional review can create a growing repository of fundamental agreements that, if adhered to, will be a solid foundation for Iraq's developing democracy.

The members of the Council of Representatives bear a historic responsibility to pursue their constituency interests only in the framework of the national interest. Their credibility rests on the extent to which they are able to exercise their individual judgement to protect Iraq's newly established national institutions from being influenced by particular interests. In all our contacts, UNAMI has therefore emphasized that Iraq's new independent institutions must be protected by effective laws and be enabled to discharge their responsibilities independently and impartially, without fear or favour.

Similarly, good governance requires a professional and well-managed civil service. Above all, the effective and transparent delivery of public services will depend on public confidence in the competence and accountability of those charged with their implementation. The Government has initiated important reforms in key ministries following public and international concern over the activities of some of their personnel. It is to be commended for those efforts and encouraged to ensure that adequate internal oversight and professional performance maintenance mechanisms are put in place.

All of that may seem far removed from the daily realities that face so many Iraqis. As the Secretary-General's report indicates, one of the key challenges

remains ensuring greater respect for human rights and the rule of law. A priority for UNAMI is to assist the Government in setting up a strong national human rights protection system by establishing an independent human rights commission, reinforcing the judiciary and the capacity of key ministries to promote and protect human rights, and by supporting non-governmental organizations and the development of a culture of human rights. Strengthening human rights and the rule of law is necessary to create solid foundations for development and reconstruction efforts. If effective remedies for present and past crimes remain elusive, more Iraqis might take the law into their own hands. Action on transitional justice will complement those efforts and help pursue with vigour the twin priorities of national reconciliation and accountability for human rights violations.

UNAMI is also providing advice to the Government on the growing problem of internal displacement, particularly with regard to shelter and assistance. The report draws attention to the fact that some 200,000 citizens have been forced to leave their homes, mainly in Baghdad, since the Samarra incident of 22 February this year. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have nearly depleted their resources earmarked for emergency humanitarian activities. Similarly, the Government is constrained in its ability to adequately respond to the situation. There is now an urgent need for new funding to meet the needs of the displaced.

Highlighting those challenges is not to deny that in a number of areas there has been measurable progress in the delivery of services. But, as the Secretary-General has stressed in his report,

> "The Iraqi people and their leaders have arrived at an important crossroads: if they are able to build firm foundations for the common interest of all Iraqis, the promise of peace and prosperity will be within reach. However, if current patterns of discord and violence prevail for much longer, there is a grave danger of a breakdown of the Iraqi State, and potentially of civil war". (*ibid., para. 69*)

Whatever the challenges of the moment — and there are many — there is still reason for optimism. The demonstrated resilience of the Iraqi people in the face of a succession of calamities and tribulations is reason enough to know that they will not be defeated in achieving their aspirations. The best option of the international community is to prove the pessimists wrong by assisting the people and Government of Iraq in realizing their national vision.

Accordingly, the time has come to hold focused discussions on how best to assist Iraq on its way towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous State. Those discussions should be as open and inclusive as possible, to ensure win-win approaches to addressing critical issues. The Government of Iraq has already made a bold start in addressing major issues through its initiatives, programmes and outreach efforts and through security and economic reforms. The international community must seize this opportunity to provide real support for Iraq's efforts to transform itself into a participatory and institutionalized democracy that ensures for all its people the full, secure and prosperous lives they have struggled and made sacrifices to achieve. There are few more noble endeavours to which to devote our energies and capacities.

UNAMI remains fully committed to play its part pursuant to its mandates under resolutions 1546 (2004) and 1700 (2006). I am grateful for the continued support of the Security Council for UNAMI's role in Iraq. A strong consensus in the Council in support of the new Government of Iraq and the United Nations role remains essential. While the United Nations presence and ability to operate effectively remain severely constrained by the security environment, UNAMI is exploring how it can maximize its impact and which tasks can be prioritized. In that regard, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to Member States, from both within and outside the Multinational Force, who support the United Nations in Iraq by providing military advisers, guard forces and movement and aviation support. UNAMI will continue to stand by the people of Iraq and will make every effort to help generate tangible progress for a democratic and prosperous Iraq that is at peace with itself, its neighbours and the wider international community.

The President: I thank Special Representative Qazi for his briefing.

Mr. Bolton (United States): As requested by the Security Council in resolutions 1546 (2004) and 1637 (2005), I am pleased to report on behalf of the 29 countries making up the Multinational Forces-Iraq

(MNF-I) on the Force's progress towards fulfilling its mandate.

This most recent reporting period coincides with the first 90 days of a democratically elected, representative unity Government — a substantial break from Iraq's past. In early June, the formation of a national unity Government was completed with the appointments of the Ministers of Interior, Defence and State for National Security. On 25 June, Prime Minister al-Maliki presented a national reconciliation and dialogue project to the Council of Representatives. This project seeks to reconcile past inequities and rally Iraqis around the principle of equality without sectarian divisions. It looks to establish the basis for national unity through the democratic process and create the conditions for Iraq to assume a leading regional and international role. In addition, the Council of Representatives adopted an accelerated schedule of sessions. Most of the 24 Council committees have formed and named chairs. The Council is making progress on key legislation required to implement the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution.

In late July, the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, with the strong support of the United States, the United Kingdom and other donor States and international financial institutions, launched an International Compact with Iraq. The International Compact will, over the next five years, bring together the international community and multilateral organizations to help Iraq achieve its vision of a united, federal and democratic country, at peace with its neighbours and itself, and economically self-sufficient and prosperous.

Since 2003, there have been significant successes in the development of legitimate political, economic and governmental institutions in Iraq. The unfolding of the democratic electoral process that we have witnessed in recent years has been a crucial success in building the foundations of a new, free and democratic Iraq.

Despite these achievements, obstacles remain. Setbacks in the level and nature of violence in Iraq continue to create significant challenges to stability, reconstruction and transition. Sectarian tensions, purposely incited by insurgents and extremists, increased over the last quarter, resulting in increased killings, kidnappings, attacks on civilians and increasing numbers of internally displaced persons. Extremists are increasingly interlocked in retaliatory violence and are seeking to expand their existing areas of influence. The sustained level of ethno-sectarian violence is one of the most significant threats to security and stability in Iraq.

Nonetheless, the Iraqi people continue to reject overwhelmingly violence as a mean to drive political change. The international community remains steadfast with the people of Iraq in their determined drive for a secure, stable and democratic country. We honour the memory and sacrifice of all who have lost their lives in the struggle for a federal, democratic, pluralist and unified Iraq.

The insurgents, extremists and terrorists remain capable of and intent on carrying out attacks against Iraqi civilians, officials and security forces, with the goal of destabilizing the legitimately elected Government of Iraq and denying the Iraqi people the democracy and promise of a better future that they have chosen the through free and fair elections.

During this period, four of Iraq's 18 provinces — Baghdad, Al-Anbar, Salah ad Din and Diyala — continued to experience more than 81 per cent of all attacks. Al-Anbar and Baghdad are the most seriously affected, accounting for 55 per cent of all attacks. Ninewa and Tamim provinces also saw significant increases in attacks over the previous quarter. Twelve provinces, containing more than 50 per cent of the population, experienced only five per cent of all attacks.

Attacks and civilian casualties, characterized by ethno-sectarian attacks and reprisals, have arisen. Violence escalated, notably in Baghdad, which, as the political, population and media centre of the country, is a high-value target for the terrorists. Nonetheless, terrorists have failed to advance their primary objectives, which include derailing Iraq's political process and widening their political support among the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people continue to express confidence in the Iraqi army to provide for their security and to reject the extremists' vision of Iraq's future.

The average number of weekly attacks increased 15 per cent over the previous reporting period's average, and Iraqi casualties increased by 51 per cent compared to the previous quarter.

MNF-I and the Iraqi Government continued to make progress, improving the security environment in Fallujah and some parts of northern Iraq. The Iraqi army has taken the lead in more counter-insurgency operations and assumed security responsibility in more areas.

The insurgency remains potent and viable, although its visibility has been overshadowed by the increase in sectarian violence it has sought foment. The rising sectarian strife defines the emerging nature of violence in mid-2006.

On 14 June, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki announced the Government's plan to provide improved security conditions in Baghdad. Operation Together Forward is an Iraqi-planned and led operation to ensure the security of Baghdad against attacks designed to uproot democracy and derail Iraq's commitment to progress. As part of this operation, Iraqi police, the Iraqi army and the national police, supported by the Multinational Forces, increased patrols and checkpoints in all areas of Baghdad, while concentrating on areas of the city that have witnessed increases in violence and sectarian killings. Security forces also worked to block terrorist entry into the capital city.

In July, during his first visit to the United States, Prime Minister al-Maliki and President Bush announced an adjustment to the Baghdad security plan. Multinational and Iraqi units were repositioned from less active areas of the country. Although in progress only a short time, this effort appears to have reduced Baghdad violence in the month of August. Initial press reports indicate that these adjustments to the Baghdad security plan have been welcomed by many Baghdad residents.

Attacks on Iraq's infrastructure continue to adversely affect oil revenues and the availability of electricity. The average weekly number of attacks on critical infrastructure continued to decline, decreasing from five per week to two per week. Although the number of attacks is decreasing, the essential services infrastructure will continue to be a high-value target for enemy elements. The Multinational Force will continue to work with the Iraqi Government and other international partners to strengthen further infrastructure security.

Although Baghdad remains the focus for sectarian and terrorist violence in Iraq, violence tied to the rejectionist insurgency, terrorist intimidation, political and tribal tensions and criminality continues in other regions. Sectarian violence is gradually spreading north into Diyala province and Kirkuk, as Sunni, Shia and Kurdish groups compete for provincial influence. Conflict in Al-Anbar province remains centred on the Sunni insurgency. Al-Qaida in Iraq continues its intimidation to coerce passive Sunni support, although tribes are pushing back to eject Al-Qaida and re-establish their dominant role. In the southern, predominantly Shia region of the country, political and tribal rivalries are a growing motive behind violence, particularly in Basra, with limited anti-Coalition attacks likely undertaken by rogue Shia militia with Iranian support.

Iraqi security forces continue to grow and improve and to conduct more and more independent operations each day. Multinational Forces continue to train, equip and mentor the ISF and to transition security responsibilities of areas to the Iraqi forces as proficiency allows and conditions permit. Transitions are evaluated area by area and region by region and are incremental to ensure an effective and successful transition of security responsibilities.

Iraq achieved another historic milestone on 13 July with the transfer of security responsibility in Al-Muthana province from MNF-I to the provincial Governor and civilian-controlled Iraqi police services. Moreover, since May of 2006, MNF-I has transferred an additional 10 forward operating bases to the Government of Iraq. Fifty-one of 110 such bases are now under Iraqi control. Dhi Qar province appears ready to assume security independence shortly, and several other provinces should meet the transition criteria before the end of the year.

In August, the Fourth Iraqi Army Division headquarters officially assumed the lead in its area of responsibility from the 101st Airborne Division. This achievement represents the halfway mark of our joint goal of putting all Iraqi security forces in the lead of coordinating, planning and conducting security operations in Iraq.

Iraqi security forces are increasingly taking the lead in operations and assuming primary responsibility for Iraq's security, as Iraqi army and police forces demonstrate an increased capability to plan and execute counter-insurgency operations.

As of 4 September, five Iraqi army divisions, 26 brigades, 85 battalions and two national police battalions assumed lead responsibility for security in their areas of operation. One hundred and six Iraqi army combat battalions and 17 strategic infrastructure battalions are conducting operations at varying levels of capability. Another three combat battalions are in the process of forming. In addition, 27 national police battalions are now operational and active. Although these units lead security operations, most still receive support from the multinational forces for their logistics and operations.

Institutional capability within the ministries of defence and interior is an increasingly important factor in the transition to Iraqi security self-reliance. As these ministries continue to staff, train and equip forces, efforts are focused on strengthening their capacity to direct, support and sustain themselves. With more than two thirds of the Iraqi army combat units now in the lead, the Multinational Force in Iraq's focus is shifting towards helping the Iraqis develop stronger logistics and command and control capabilities. MNFI will also continue to help develop and mentor the capacity of the Ministry of Defence to organize, train, equip and modernize its forces.

In the first week of September, the Ministry of Defence and the joint headquarters assumed operational control of the Iraqi ground forces command, the Iraqi navy and the Iraqi air force. The Iraqi ground forces command assumed operational control of the eighth Iraqi army division. The Government of Iraq will determine when the command is ready to assume more control, but the transfer demonstrates Iraq's increasing capabilities.

Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior forces now total more than 298,000 trained personnel. That includes over 115,000 Ministry of Defence personnel, over 118,000 police and over 65,000 other Ministry of Interior forces.

The Joint Committee to Achieve Iraqi Security Self-reliance announced by Prime Minister al-Maliki and President Bush on 25 July will develop a conditions-based road map for full transition of security responsibility.

The United Nations contributions in Iraq are vital. We urge the United Nations to continue to fulfil its mandate under resolution 1546 (2004). On 10 August, the Security Council adopted resolution 1700 (2006) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for another 12 months and reaffirming its commitment to assisting the Iraqi people and Government in building a productive and prosperous nation.

The role of the United Nations in supporting and co-chairing the International Compact with Iraq is a key new component of the role of the United Nations which was noted in this resolution. The United Nations now has representatives in its compound in Irbil, and a United Nations military liaison adviser is currently in Kirkuk.

Multinational forces, notably the Georgian, Romanian and South Korean contingents continue to provide security for the United Nations in Baghdad, Basra and Irbil, respectively. These troops provide static site security, reconnaissance, security patrols, convoy escorts, checkpoints, and, when necessary, Medevac and emergency evacuation. In addition, Fijian troops provide static and close-in protection for United Nations personnel and facilities in Baghdad.

In conclusion, the evolution of a fully free, secure and prosperous Iraq remains a work in progress. Training Iraqi security forces to assume primary responsibility for security is essential. Since taking the reins of Government in June, Prime Minister al-Maliki's Government has taken promising steps towards national reconciliation as well as economic development reform and reconstruction through the launch of the International Compact with Iraq. The Multinational Force and the international community stand with the Iraqi people as Prime Minister al-Maliki's Government continues its efforts to promote national dialogue and inclusion and strive tirelessly to deliver improvements in security, stability, and quality of life to the Iraqi people.

Iraq's neighbours share some responsibility for Iraq's internal security. Syria should prevent financial and material support, particularly arms, from entering Iraq. Iran should stop providing munitions and other support to extremist groups in Iraq. Iraq's regional neighbours should do more to help Iraq's democratically elected Government by following through on pledges to provide economic assistance and debt relief.

We applaud the Kingdom of Jordan for having recently sent an ambassador to Baghdad and hope that other Arab States will soon do the same. Moreover, we

renew our call to the entire international community to support Iraq's sovereign Government and redouble its assistance efforts.

The Multinational Force and combined MNF-International Stabilization Force (ISF) efforts continue to support an environment that will allow Iraq's democratically elected Government to succeed and the Iraqi people to realize a brighter, secure and more prosperous future.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first and foremost to thank both Mr. Ashraf Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, and Ambassador John Bolton, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for their briefings to the Security Council. Allow me also to welcome the presence among us of the Ambassador of Iraq this morning.

Iraq is witnessing considerable progress at the political, constitutional and democratic levels. The first Iraqi Government elected under the new Constitution was formed last June. This represents a culmination of the transitional political process which is in keeping with the transitional administrative law approved by the Security Council in resolution 1546 (2004). However, this progress has been overshadowed by the seriousness of the tense internal situation, a lack of security and widespread violations of human rights due to intensive violence and grave terrorist acts, making it incumbent on the Government, indeed the entire Iraqi people, to make a national dialogue a top priority so as to promote national reconciliation and overcome the intercommunal strife and escalating violence which afflict Iraq and have led to one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today.

Nearly 3,000 innocent civilians are falling victim to violence every month, and thousands more are wounded. The number of displaced persons this year has so far reached 200,000. As a result, national, regional and international efforts must be mobilized in order to address this priority issue. In that regard, we look forward to the holding of the Iraq reconciliation conference, to be held under the auspices of the League of Arab States and which the United Nations is currently helping to prepare.

We also hope that the national reconciliation plan announced by the Iraqi Government in June will be crowned with success. We are confident that our brothers in Iraq will overcome the obstacles on the road to stability, because that is the best way to set Iraq on an irreversible course towards a future of peace and democracy that allows for the withdrawal of foreign troops.

In addition to promoting a comprehensive, participatory and transparent political process that responds to the aspirations of all communities in Iraq, the current deteriorating security situation must be brought under control so as to enable the Iraqi security forces to take over responsibility for security in the country, a responsibility now being discharged primarily by the Multinational Force.

Ensuring that the basic living conditions of the Iraqi people improve and addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation is no less important than national reconciliation or, indeed, than strengthening security forces to ensure the stability of Iraq.

In that regard, last July the Iraqi Government and the United Nations signed the International Compact with Iraq, headed jointly by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. The ministerial meeting to be convened by the Secretary-General in New York next week will be an opportunity for the Iraqi Government to set out its economic programme as well as specific frameworks for agreement, which we hope will bolster the Iraqi economy and thereby benefit the Iraqi people. Such an agreement must be as comprehensive as possible so as to ensure constructive and interactive regional and international participation.

In the light of the difficult situation prevailing in Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq has an important and commendable role to play in providing support, advice and electoral assistance. It also provides reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance, as well as assistance in the area of human rights. The Mission is also providing the necessary assistance Iraq needs to enable it to achieve the fundamental goals of resolution 1546 (2004). Finally, let me stress the importance of the unity and cohesion of Iraq.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I wish to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, for his introduction of the report on United Nations activities in Iraq (S/2006/706). I also thank Ambassador Bolton for his briefing.

My delegation notes that further to the launching of the security plan for Baghdad in June 2006, a second phase was initiated at the beginning of August 2006 with the redeployment of additional troops of the Multinational Force to the capital. In addition, the Government of Iraq made efforts to promote national reconciliation and dialogue through the unveiling of the National Reconciliation Plan which, inter alia, called for a qualified amnesty, the release of detainees and the reform of the legal and judicial systems. We hope that those measures will yield positive results and reduce the level of violence and insecurity that continues to afflict Iraq.

We welcome the launching of the International Compact with Iraq, which should provide an effective framework for Iraq's economic transformation and its integration into the regional and global economy. The Compact must, of necessity, reflect the interconnectedness of political and security developments and Iraq's recovery, which is deemed a prerequisite for sustainable regional investment. The active involvement of the United Nations Development Group, United Nations agencies and other international multinational financial institutions is very commendable; we expect that their guidance and support will make a large contribution to the sustainability of the Compact.

It is our expectation that the meeting of Foreign Ministers on 18 September 2006 to review progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) and to engage in a strategy dialogue on the future of Iraq will come off successfully. The meeting should enable the Government of Iraq to present its programme for the reconstruction of the country within the framework of the International Compact and for the United Nations to make concrete proposals for the consolidation of its assistance to Iraq.

My delegation is pleased to note the ongoing efforts by the Office of Constitutional Support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to play a leading role in promoting dialogue and building consensus on the constitution of Iraq. It successfully completed its programme to promote multiparty dialogue, which engaged senior political leaders, technocrats and members of civil society in discussions on critical and relevant issues. Further, we note that it continued to provide advice and assistance to the Government and the Council of Representatives on issues relating to the establishment of the constitutional review committees.

UNAMI's activities in providing the Government of Iraq with guidance in addressing the needs of internally displaced persons as regards shelter and assistance are commendable. We are also gratified to note that UNAMI has, through numerous missions and regular dialogue, helped address the specific needs of communities in various regions and has enhanced coordination and interaction between the provincial and central authorities in meeting reconstruction and development challenges.

We note with concern, however, that United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have heavily depleted the resources earmarked for emergency humanitarian activities. That inadequacy is compounded by the inability of the Government of Iraq to respond effectively to the plight of the rapidly increasing number of internally displaced persons. The request by the Secretary-General for substantial new funding to meet the needs of those persons should therefore be urgently addressed to enable the United Nations to contribute effectively to lessening the suffering of those persons.

The acute human rights and humanitarian crisis in Iraq, characterized by indiscriminate killings, targeted attacks, crime and corruption, is indeed very worrying and of great concern to my delegation. It is apparent that State institutions are unable to protect individuals or address the needs of victims of gross human rights violations, who include women, children and members of ethnic and religious minorities. Indeed, the Secretary-General's report notes that the impact of violence on those vulnerable persons has been particularly alarming.

We acknowledge the work done by UNAMI in the development of a strong human rights system and wish to encourage it to sustain its support for the Iraqi authorities in the drafting of a law for the establishment of a national human rights commission, and also to the Rule of Law Sector Working Group to develop a comprehensive strategy on the rule of law.

We wish to place on record the exemplary work being done in Iraq by the United Nations, whose staff are often exposed to considerable risks. The presence of the United Nations and its ability to operate effectively in Iraq remain constrained, but the Organization has been able to provide assistance to the

Government of Iraq in the several key areas I have mentioned. We hope that UNAMI will soon develop adequate self-reliance mechanisms that will enable it to operate safely and therefore more effectively in Iraq.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Qazi, and Ambassador Bolton of the United States for their briefings. We have carefully read the report submitted by Secretary-General Annan (S/2006/706), which contains comprehensive information and profound analysis. We endorse his observations.

Over the past three years, the Iraqi people have achieved important results in the process of political transition. Within three years, they have held two national elections, formulated a permanent constitution, carried out a constitutional referendum and established a democratically elected Government. That series of achievements has fully demonstrated the Iraqi people's strong aspirations and firm commitment to peace, democracy and prosperity. We hope that the hard-working and courageous Iraqi people can, through their tireless efforts, overcome all of the obstacles in their path and achieve peace and stability at an early date.

As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, Iraq is currently at a critical crossroads and is still faced with formidable political, security and economic challenges. In the political field, the new Iraqi Government should do all it can to continue to enhance the inclusiveness of the political process, promote national reconciliation and appropriately settle outstanding problems concerning the constitution.

We welcome the National Reconciliation Plan promulgated by Prime Minister al-Maliki and hope that Iraq's various sectarian factions and ethnic groups will unite and cooperate with the Government in effectively implementing the Plan, and that they will settle their differences and deepen their common understanding through dialogue. In that respect, we support the initiative of the League of Arab States to convene a conference on Iraqi national accord.

In the area of security, the Iraqi Government and the Multinational Force must try hard to eradicate the root causes of instability. Security and stability represent the biggest challenges now facing the Iraqi Government. They are also fundamental for the future political, economic and social development of Iraq. Military means alone cannot deal with the root ca of the problem. They rather tend to exacerbate vicious cycle of violence and produce more terror instability. We note that the Iraqi Government and Multinational Force have taken some measure improve the security situation. We hope that the Government of Iraq will gradually take responsibility for maintaining security within country, creating an environment that is favourabl the disarmament, demobilization and reintegratio militias and improving law and order so as to win support of the people. In the economic area, the Government must try hard to achieve early result economic reconstruction and to effectively improve living standards of the Iraqi people.

We welcome the International Compact with jointly launched by Iraq and the United Nations. hope that the process will enable Iraq and international community to establish a new kin cooperative partnership. The International Com should be broadly inclusive and should ensure tha parties participate in the economic reconstructio Iraq in an equal and fair manner in order to jointly Iraq resolve its practical difficulties in a construc spirit.

There can be no political and econo reconstruction of Iraq without the support assistance of the international community. appreciate the important role played by the Un Nations in Iraq and we welcome the Secret General's initiative of convening a ministerial mee on the question of Iraq. We hope that that meeting help consolidate the common understanding of international community and speed up the political economic reconstruction of Iraq in a joint effort to Iraq build a better future.

Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in Fren*: Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank for having organized today's debate on the situatio Iraq, in the light of recent developments and of activities undertaken by the United Nations Assista Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Multinational Fo (MNF). We should also like to extend our thanks Mr. Qazi for his presentation and to the delegation the United States of America, speaking on behalf of MNF.

The security situation in Iraq remains essenti very worrying, in spite of developments in the polit

process in this country, in particular with regard to the establishment of the institutional framework and of the organs that are charged with leading the various institutions. It is true that encouraging initiatives have been undertaken by the constitutionally elected Iraqi Government with the support of Iraq's partners at both regional and international level. My delegation welcomed the complete formation of the Iraqi Government and, in particular, the allocation of key posts in the Ministries of Defence, the Interior and National Security. We also welcomed the launching of the Baghdad security plan which is currently in the second phase of its implementation.

However, and unfortunately, violence and violation of human rights among the Iraqi population remain endemic. Today, Iraq is one of the most dangerous places in the world. Each day brings its share of murders, assassinations, abductions and acts of intercommunity violence. In terms of violence, horror vies with fanaticism to a point where the country is on the brink of a widespread civil war which would, without any doubt, undermine all the efforts undertaken for Iraq's recovery and may well discourage the international community.

That is precisely the aim sought by the proponents of terror and of chaos. At this crucial moment in Iraq's history, the international community must provide itself with the means to support the efforts undertaken by the Iraqi Government to gain control over the situation as a whole, including national reconciliation.

Only national reconciliation, particularly through the seeking of consensus and by way of inclusive dialogue, can offer a way out of this crisis, as no military solution will bring peace or security to Iraq. All the champions of peace and security in Iraq must be fully involved and must engage fully and in good faith in seeking to build national reconciliation and the essential confidence-building measures. To that end, my delegation urges the League of Arab States to convene as soon as possible the proposed conference on Iraqi national reconciliation.

The development and the presentation of the International Compact for Iraq must also contribute towards the restoration of peace and security. That ambitious plan, co-sponsored by the Iraqi Government and by the United Nations, deserves the firm and resolved support of the international community for its implementation. We look forward with interest to the conclusions of the meeting on 18 September, convened to that effect by the Secretary-General.

To conclude, my delegation commends the efforts undertaken by the UNAMI and by the soldiers of the MNF working in a very difficult situation.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank Mr. Ashraf Qazi for his presentation of the Secretary-General's report and Ambassador John Bolton for his briefing on the activities of the Multinational Force (MNF). I should like to make the following comments.

My delegation fully shares the observation of the Secretary-General that Iraq remains at a crossroads. The security situation is of deep concern and the risk of its deterioration cannot be ruled out. But the prospects for an improvement still exist and, in spite of considerable difficulties, it is not too late to get out of the spiral and to chart a course for emergency from the crisis.

The Government of Iraq, whose establishment we welcomed last May, has undertaken significant and commendable efforts, at the political level with the National Reconciliation Plan, at the security level with its plan to re-establish security in Baghdad, in terms of reform, with its resolve to undertake substantial legislative work in parliament and also, now, with the initiative for the International Compact for Iraq.

Still, as I have already indicated, the challenges remain huge. As was noted by the Secretary-General, Iraq has become one of the most violent conflict zones in the world. Intercommunity tensions have risen to a dangerous level to the point of breeding fears of a civil war in the country. The number of civilian casualties has grown considerably — more than 100 per day — almost 6,500 killed in June and July 2006 alone, and the number of displaced persons has also increased substantially.

In this context, France wishes to reiterate its support for the Government of Iraq and for its Prime Minister, and to say once again that we are prepared to develop cooperation with him and to remain at Iraq's side.

We welcome Iraq's will to provide a comprehensive response to the challenges posed and, as the Secretary-General said, there will not just be a single military response to the challenges, but several

types of responses to be found. At first, there will be a political response, which is the purpose of the National Reconciliation Plan launched by the Prime Minister. In that regard, we believe that only a truly inclusive process will help isolate extremist groups and bring back into the political arena those communities that have been excluded from it. I also note the Secretary-General's appeal to undertake a constitutional review process well aware though we are of the difficulty of the exercise.

And then there is the response to the legitimate security needs of Iraqis. There must be an end to the violence that has increased and that my country condemns in the firmest possible fashion. The training of Iraqi security forces remains a priority, as does the handling of the phenomenon of militia which, the Secretary-General's report notes, continues to grow.

My delegation likewise remains convinced that a clear and agreed timeline for the withdrawal of foreign forces is indispensable to allow the Iraqis to persevere in a context of responsibility and sovereignty.

There is also the response to the challenges of reconstruction and the expectations of the population. That is the purpose of the International Compact with Iraq. France, with the European Union, welcomed the launching of that project and expressed our willingness to support it. It was in that spirit that the French Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the meeting of the preparatory group in Abu Dhabi.

But my country also stressed the importance of establishing this project around a number of principles. This process must be conducted by Iraqis and be based on the mobilization of their efforts and their resources, in particular, their natural resources; the political and security conditions necessary for any substantial reform must be created; and this new contract must establish a genuine partnership on the basis of well-identified criteria and the implementation of the principle of conditionality.

Furthermore, there must be the support of the regional and international communities. Any political solution presupposes that the major players involved, particularly among Iraq's neighbours, should be associated in one way or other with the efforts to promote the unity and integrity of that country. In that regard, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his willingness to convene a meeting on those items on 18 September.

To conclude, I should like to commend UNAMI for its remarkable work and to recall our support for United Nations action in Iraq, not only at the political level, to support the process of dialogue and national reconciliation and to contribute to full respect for human rights in the country, but also at the economic level, to coordinate international assistance and to promote implementation of the Compact initiative.

The Secretary-General's report usefully recalls both the difficulties and the hopes and outlines the prospects. The priority remains re-establishing an independent, sovereign, pluralistic and united Iraq that is able to find its way back to the path of stability and regain its standing in the community of nations. The international community must continue to play its role of helping Iraq and its leaders move forward in that direction. France intends to do its utmost in support of those efforts.

In that connection, my country expresses the hope that the initiative undertaken by the League of Arab States with the support of the United Nations will soon lead to the convening of a conference on an inter-Iraqi national accord.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I would like to thank Special Representative Qazi for his statement, and Ambassador Bolton for his statement on behalf of the Multinational Force.

As described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2006/706), the situation in Iraq continues to present challenges to the international community on several fronts. However, we remain convinced that the visions and the political initiative of the new Government, combined with the continued commitment of the international community, will make the International Compact with Iraq a success and will provide the people of Iraq with a fresh start.

The security situation remains very serious in several parts of Iraq. Indeed, the Secretary-General mentions "growing violence and insecurity", particularly in Baghdad and in the southern and western regions. In the Secretary-General's view, the current level of violence is likely to continue for some time. The sectarian nature of much of the violence is a cause for particular concern. In addition, the report describes an acute human rights and humanitarian crisis and State institutions unable to protect individuals from gross human rights violations. The

number of internally displaced Iraqis more than doubled during the reporting period.

Humanitarian needs must be urgently addressed. Human rights must be respected, and the Iraqi Government should give due attention to the situation. Clearly, the influence of sectarian-based militias cannot be curbed by security operations alone. Reconciliation, economic development and a well-functioning independent police force and justice system must form part of the solution.

We welcome the fact that the Iraqi Government is determined to improve the situation through a series of political initiatives, notably the peace and reconciliation plan launched in June. The plan contains the right elements, but implementation remains key. In the national reconciliation process, the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) should play a pivotal role.

We are pleased to see the increasing capabilities among the Iraqi security forces, which made possible the transfer of security responsibility in Al-Muthana province this summer. With stronger and more confident national forces, and with the continued support of the Multinational Force, we hope that the level of violence will decrease and that the main focus will be directed towards the reconstruction of Iraq.

The launch of the Iraq Compact, on 27 July, marks a new departure for international support for the realization of the Iraqi Government's plans for a united, federal and democratic society at peace with its neighbours. Denmark stands ready to contribute to that process.

Denmark intends to maintain its presence in Iraq as long as our support is requested by the Iraqi Government and the United Nations and as long as we believe that our presence is meaningful. This spring, the Danish Parliament decided to extend the mandate of the Danish troops in Iraq until the end of June 2007. Denmark's involvement in Iraq also comprises reconstruction and humanitarian assistance; we have committed approximately $90 million.

As I have mentioned, Denmark supports an expansion of the United Nations role in Iraq. Denmark continues to provide direct support to UNAMI. Effective in mid-November, we have decided to comply with a UNAMI request to deploy a C-130 aircraft suitable for both passengers and cargo.

Iraq is at a critical juncture. The political process mapped out in resolution 1546 (2004) is almost complete, and a broad-based and constitutionally elected Government has been formed. However, many serious challenges remain. With the full backing of the international community, the Iraq Compact will, in the coming weeks and months, provide vital support for the development of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Iraq.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom thanks Special Representative Qazi and Ambassador Bolton for the updates they provided to the Council this morning. It is also a pleasure to welcome the presence of Ambassador Al Bayati at this meeting.

We commend the ongoing work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on the ground in support of the Government and the people of Iraq. The importance of that work across the political, reconstruction and human rights spheres cannot be overstated. As the latest report on UNAMI's activities (S/2006/706) notes, the Iraqi people, through their active participation in two elections, concerning the constitutional process and the constitutional referendum, have made clear their commitment to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Iraq.

But while there has been impressive political progress, culminating in the formation of a Government of National Unity, there remain serious challenges on the ground. The UNAMI report highlights some of those concerns: cementing national reconciliation, curbing the influence of militias, tackling sectarian violence and terrorism, promoting reconstruction and development and improving human rights.

Tackling the high level of violence and the grave human toll it inflicts must be the top priority. We welcome Prime Minister al-Maliki's Baghdad security plan, implemented in conjunction with the Multinational Force, which is beginning to have an impact on the ground. We also welcome the progress made in training and equipping Iraqi forces, as well as the historic handover of security responsibilities in Al-Muthana and the decision to transfer responsibility in Dhi Qar. We look forward to the Iraqi Government building on that progress, in particular by beginning rapidly to tackle militia issues.

Together with measures to improve security directly, there must be parallel progress on the political, economic and human rights tracks. The United Kingdom welcomes Prime Minister al-Maliki's National Reconciliation Plan, as well as the United Nations contribution in support of it. It is crucial that Iraq's political leaders of all communities should come together to promote stability, security and economic development. It is also crucial that the international community continue and intensify its support for Iraq's Government at this critical juncture. The International Compact provides such a vehicle, allowing the Iraqi Government to set out a compelling vision for the country and permitting the international community to lend concrete assistance in implementing that vision.

We therefore look forward to the high-level meeting to be held in New York on 18 September to help take this work forward. We hope that the Compact in turn will lead to the international community and the region deepening their engagement with Iraq.

We also look forward to the planned Arab League conference in support of Prime Minister al-Maliki's efforts to promote reconciliation. We hope it might be possible for it to take place soon, and so we call on Iraq's neighbours, in particular Syria and Iran, to do more to prevent the flow into Iraq of arms and materiel that promote the insurgency inside Iraq.

Iraq's future is our shared concern. Helping Iraq achieve a stable, democratic and prosperous future is in all our interests.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, for his presentation and to take this opportunity to convey to him our deep appreciation for his work and that of all the personnel of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, who are working in extremely difficult conditions. I also thank Ambassador Bolton for his presentation on behalf of the Multinational Force.

We regret to note once again that, in spite of the conclusion of the political transition process and the formation of a constitutional Iraqi Government, the security and human rights situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate. There is nothing to indicate that the violence will not continue over forthcoming months, and we believe that there have been serious warnings regarding the risk of a civil war. We are convinced that there are no military solutions to the many challenges facing Iraq and that any strategy aimed at rebuilding and stabilizing the situation in this country must address the root causes of the crisis. The Government of Iraq must work with a sense of urgency to overcome the increasingly apparent divisions among Iraqi ethnic and other groups.

The national reconciliation process is of utmost urgency and priority. In this context, we reiterate our support for the National Reconciliation Plan put forward by Prime Minister al-Maliki. Likewise, we support the initiative of the League of Arab States to convene a conference on Iraqi national accord, which unfortunately has been postponed on several occasions.

We also feel it is essential that the constitutional review process be launched; and in this regard we also have to note that almost four months after the inauguration of the Government there has been no progress. On this point, I would like to ask Mr. Qazi if this delay will affect the time line envisaged in article 137 of the Iraqi constitution. I would like to know his views on the prospects for constitutional reform, in particular taking into account the latest developments in the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

The main victims of violence in Iraq are innocent civilians. As the Secretary-General highlights in his report (S/2006/706), an average of 100 individuals are killed per day, and Iraq has thus become one of the most violent conflict zones in the world.

I would like to reiterate Argentina's serious concern regarding the human rights situation in Iraq. There is evidence of a pattern of generalized violations of human rights throughout the territory of that country. Sectarian violence is an increasing threat to the people of Iraq and has reached alarming levels. Armed militia activity is a cause for particular concern, because it breeds a vicious cycle of attacks, reprisals and revenge, which largely contribute to the current climate of insecurity and fear among the civilian population. The Government of Iraq should take decisive measures to confront this problem and to protect the lives of civilians. It should also foster an environment conducive to the disarming, demobilization and reintegration of all militias.

We recall what we have said on previous occasions: the Multinational Force and the Iraqi security forces bear primary responsibility for fully respecting the provisions of human rights law and of

international humanitarian law. Thousands of detainees are being held without due process, and conditions in many prisons are unacceptable. We expect all these matters to be fully investigated and those responsible for these human rights violations to be brought to justice.

Argentina also welcomes the progress that has been made in developing the International Compact with Iraq, and we hope that this will be formally presented before the end of 2006. We also welcome the Secretary-General's announcement of the conference to take place on 18 September 2006.

To conclude, I would like to underline that, after the conclusion of the transitional process, efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation in Iraq have reached an important juncture. The options are clear: either the solid foundation is established for a democratic, sovereign and unified Iraq at peace with itself, or we may witness the disintegration of the Iraqi State and, possibly, civil war. That would be extremely detrimental not only to the Iraqi people but also to the region and the international community in general. Argentina will continue to support long-term solutions in this respect that will help to prevent the latter scenario from occurring.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Mr. Qazi for his briefing and for introducing the current report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/706). I wish to take this opportunity to commend him in person, and to commend all United Nations staff and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq personnel for the outstanding work they are carrying out in and for Iraq under truly difficult circumstances. I also thank Ambassador Bolton for his report on behalf of the countries that make up the Multinational Force, among them my own country, Slovakia.

As we heard in the briefing, the situation in Iraq remains complex and requires thorough attention, as well as the unconditional support and assistance of the international community. This is crucial, particularly at this critical time when the Iraqi people and their leaders have arrived at an important crossroads that could lead the country either to peace and prosperity or, as a worst case scenario, towards dangerous State breakdown and potential civil war.

During the past three years, the people and the leaders of Iraq have clearly demonstrated their commitment and support to their country's political transition and have made many sacrifices to achieve that goal. As a result, Iraq has successfully met the benchmarks endorsed by resolution 1546 (2004), and the first constitutionally elected Government is now in place, complete and fully operational. Such an historic achievement should not be wasted. We deem as top priorities for the Government of Iraq the further strengthening of democratic institutions; effective implementation of governmental programmes, mainly in the security and human rights areas; and the adoption of concrete measures aimed at addressing the basic needs, concerns and aspirations of all Iraq's communities and constituencies and at the rapid improvement of their welfare and basic living conditions. Such steps towards stabilization are urgently needed in order to foster the further successful transition of Iraq. We remain convinced that a sustained inter-communal and intra-communal dialogue, national reconciliation, constitutional review and implementation of the constitution represent important confidence-building measures that can help Iraq to tackle its many challenges.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General has emphasized in his report that the Iraqi Government must do everything possible to progressively foster an environment conducive to the demobilization, disarming and reintegration of militias. In our view, strong United Nations involvement in Iraq's transitional process remains instrumental. We therefore welcome the recent initiative of the Government of Iraq to launch the International Compact for a new partnership with the international community, as well as the United Nations decision to provide strong support in developing it.

Along with the European Union, Slovakia expresses its readiness to participate actively and constructively in the process. We also stress the importance of Iraqi ownership of the process of developing the Compact and the broad involvement of the international community and the active participation of neighbours and partners in the region. We also welcome and support the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers of relevant parties in New York on 18 September to engage in a strategy dialogue on the future of Iraq.

Regrettably, the level of violence and insecurity continues to rise in many areas of Iraq, and the mounting civilian casualties remain a source of our

constant concern. The tangible improvement of the overall security situation in the country thus remains a key objective.

Similarly, we remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Iraq. The effects of the ongoing insurgency, sectarian violence, revenge attacks and militia activities are alarming. We feel that further measures are needed to reinforce the justice and security systems and to develop a robust human rights agenda in order not only to protect the lives of innocent civilians, but also to hold fully accountable those responsible for violent acts. In that regard, we welcome the ongoing efforts of the Government of Iraq to take concrete measures to improve security, such as the Baghdad security plan, as well as Prime Minister Al-Maliki's decision to launch a National Reconciliation Plan.

We also fully support and encourage effective regional engagement between Iraq and its neighbours. We welcome the continuing efforts and progress made by the League of Arab States to convene a conference on Iraqi national accord. Contributing to and promoting durable peace and stability will benefit not only that country, but also its immediate neighbours, as well as the wider region. In that regard, we feel that mainly Iraq's immediate neighbours could and should play a more active role in promoting and supporting its peace and stability, including by preventing the flow of arms into Iraq and also by cutting off support for various militias. We regard their contribution to the success of Iraq's stabilization as instrumental and decisive. Hence, we hope that Iraq will receive from its neighbours the required cooperation and assistance, and we encourage Iraq's neighbours to act in that positive direction, which will ultimately be useful to them as well as to the wider region.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that Slovakia remains fully committed to the political and economic transition of Iraq. We are one of the troop-contributing countries to the Multinational Force and we stand ready to assist Iraq in financial and material ways and means as well.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I thank Mr. Qazi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for his quarterly report on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and Ambassador Bolton of the United States for the update on the operations of the Multinational Force.

My delegation wishes to commend UNAMI, together with the other United Nations agencies, on their dedicated service in Iraq under very challenging circumstances. We are particularly grateful to the Governments of Japan and Denmark, which have provided much needed logistical support to UNAMI. We are grateful to note that UNAMI and other United Nations agencies have been able to continue to provide and coordinate access and delivery of basic services, including trying to restore public infrastructure and offering much needed assistance to internally displaced persons, whose numbers have been increasing as the violence continues to escalate.

The high level of violence in Iraq is very worrying, as it has affected all sections of the population and resulted in death, damage to property, extreme hardship and suffering. Particularly disturbing to us is the fact that innocent civilians, including women and children, have fallen victim to the attacks. The violence bears all the hallmarks of both terrorism and anarchism. Reports of the police picking up many bodies in Baghdad and its suburbs that have been bound, tortured and shot execution-style are now a daily affair. The urgency of restoring order, especially in Baghdad, cannot be overemphasized. Iraqis are desperate for peace. Every action possible must be taken to help them prevent what is now sectarian strife from degenerating into anarchy and civil war.

We commend the Iraqi security forces, in collaboration with the Multinational Force, for recently launching a major security crackdown in Baghdad that has resulted in a slight decrease in violence. Deliberate and determined efforts must continue in order to free the country from the armed gangs and militias that are roaming around, terrorizing, kidnapping and killing innocent people.

There is an urgent need to stand up to and eradicate the extreme violence in Iraq and to replace it with democracy, liberty and the rule of law. That will require sustained engagement by the security forces. We must also pay tribute to the resilience of the Iraqi people and to the manner in which they are bearing their current trials and tribulations.

As for the Government of Iraq, it has to continue to demonstrate that it is effective, and it must be applauded for some of its valiant performances on the

security front. We also welcome and encourage the political efforts that Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki has been making in the search for peace in Iraq, including paying visits to neighbouring countries to seek their support. Of particular significance was his very recent visit to Iran, which ended in important pronouncements on and commitments to good-neighbourliness and peace. On the domestic front, the need for national reconciliation through inclusive dialogue cannot be overemphasized. It is the linchpin of a political solution and future stability.

The preparatory work for the International Compact for Iraq, under the auspices of the Government of Iraq and the United Nations, is timely and deserves full support from funding institutions and donor countries. In spite of its economic focus, the Iraq Compact may turn out to be an effective engine for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. The restoration of Iraq's war-torn and shattered infrastructure will require an enabling environment addressing the underlying causes of violence, insecurity and gross violations of human rights.

Prime Minister Al-Maliki's National Reconciliation Plan also deserves support. There is a need for genuine efforts at consensus-building among the many diverse communities in the country. An Iraqi-led initiative can make an important contribution to the Plan and has the potential to make it a real success. Care must be taken to fully involve community and religious leaders in promoting reconciliation.

We appreciate the support that the Multinational Force is providing to the United Nations in Iraq through the provision of military advisers, guard forces and movement and aviation support. We also commend the efforts of the Arab countries, which have been organizing vital meetings aimed at restoring peace and development in Iraq.

Iraq continues to face formidable political, security and economic challenges at a time of new political and security crises in the region, which invariably have a negative impact on the internal situation in Iraq. It is necessary for the building of security forces that they continue to receive outside assistance until they are ready to take full control of the security of their country. Iraq shall also continue to rely heavily on varied forms of support from the international community. We urge generous and timely support from all those in a position to assist the war-ravaged country.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/706) on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which provides a detailed analysis of the situation in Iraq and the complex highs and lows of the Iraqi political process at the current stage. We fully share the assessments and conclusions of the Secretary-General.

I should also like to thank Mr. Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for the briefing he has given us clarifying events in the country. We should also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Bolton for his report on the security situation in Iraq.

The process of transforming Iraq is indeed very complex and is being pursued against a backdrop of continuous violence, extremist attacks and a lack of consensus in society on most key issues of significance there. We support the efforts of the Government of Iraq to normalize the situation. Along with the Secretary-General, we therefore welcome such actions on the part of the Government of Iraq as the peace initiative for Baghdad and the National Reconciliation Plan proposed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, both of which are designed to ensure the unity of Iraqi society.

We are closely following the discussion in Iraq on federalizing the country. It is our view that Iraq can select the form of government that meets the interests of its multi-ethnic people, including a federal State.

Another important issue is the foreign military presence in the territory of Iraq. We are convinced that that presence must not be permanent or indefinite. In the end, all foreign troops must completely leave Iraqi territory and transfer responsibility for events there to the national army and the police.

Combating terrorism in Iraq solely through the use of force is short-sighted. A much more realistic approach is to achieve national consensus and reconciliation through a broad-based political dialogue. We welcome the assistance that the United Nations is providing in that regard to political factions in the country. We believe it is necessary to continue to have the most active participation of the United Nations and UNAMI in the Iraqi political process.

With regard to the International Compact, in principle we agree with the relevant provisions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on that matter. We believe the Compact should serve the long-term work of economic recovery and rehabilitation of an independent Iraq.

Mr. Gallardo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for his presentation. We also thank Ambassador John Bolton, Permanent Representative of the United States, for his report on the Multinational Force.

Security and instability problems continue to be fundamental issues for the new Iraqi Government. The Government's recent decisions and plans to expand dialogue and encourage reconciliation are positive steps. We hope that they will be effective in addressing the current challenges in Iraq.

We support efforts conducive to the restoration of trust among all groups in Iraq, whether domestic initiatives or efforts by organizations such as the League of Arab States, including those that may be made by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. All such initiatives can contribute to an inclusive dialogue, help to reduce internal tensions in Iraq and strengthen national reconciliation. Cooperation among neighbouring countries to improve Iraq's stability is also important.

With regard to the security situation, Peru rejects all terrorist attacks carried out in Iraq. We also condemn sectarian violence and acts of intolerance. We are confident that the Government of Iraq can make progress in implementing policies that will strengthen the central control of the public authorities and provide security and protection for all its citizens. In that connection, we believe that those responsible for security in Iraq must carry out their duties by protecting civilians and respecting the rule of law and human rights. We also hope to see the speedy establishment of such institutions as a national human rights commission, which will help to strengthen the rule of law and the judicial system.

The task of rebuilding Iraq is another core challenge for the Iraqi Government. The international community must continue its support and efforts to achieve substantial progress in Iraq's economic recovery and reintegration into the global economy. In that connection, there is no doubt that the Compact with Iraq is the most solid initiative to that end.

Finally, my delegation would like to express its support for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We believe that UNAMI must continue to provide support — in accordance with its mandates and as the situation on the ground permits — in all areas that can contribute to strengthening political and legal stability and institutional and economic recovery, as well as to provide humanitarian assistance and promote the observance of human rights in Iraq.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I join others in thanking Mr. Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, and Mr. John Bolton for their informative briefings on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Multinational Force (MNF), respectively.

Over the past several months, we have witnessed serious developments and crises in the Middle East, including in Lebanon and Gaza. However, those challenges in no way diminish the importance of Iraq for the overall stability of the region and beyond.

Iraq has completed the political process prescribed in resolution 1546 (2004). It is our hope that Iraq will continue on the path towards a free, democratic and stable State promoting national reconciliation and development as a prosperous and responsible member of the international community under a democratically elected Government.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Government and people are confronted daily with mounting complex internal challenges in achieving national reconciliation, ensuring security in communities and promoting the country's reconstruction and development. Of particularly serious concern is the continuing widespread violence, sectarian and inter-communal tensions and clashes and terrorist attacks and insurgency, with many civilian and other killings and casualties compounding instability and causing large-scale displacement of people. As Iraqi society undergoes such a severe and difficult phase, and while acknowledging the importance of respecting ownership of the process by the Iraqi people themselves in establishing responsible governance in the pursuit of its new nation-building, the broader international community must also continue to provide the necessary support, in partnership with the Iraqi Government and people, to assist them in their efforts. In that regard, we

welcome the ministerial-level meeting on Iraq to be held on 18 September under the auspices of the United Nations.

Japan commends the important role that UNAMI has been playing in the Iraq process in the current challenging circumstances and expresses once again its strong support for the Mission's activities.

In the current situation, we place importance on three areas of UNAMI's activities, based on its mandate: first, the promotion of national dialogue; secondly, assistance in the constitutional and electoral processes; and, thirdly, facilitation of coordination and delivery of reconstruction and development assistance. We believe that combined efforts in those three areas will help promote national reconciliation and improve the living conditions of the Iraqi people, which, in turn, will lead to a de-escalation of tensions in society.

Political stability and an improvement in security are prerequisites for economic reconstruction, and these elements are closely interlinked. We therefore appreciate the efforts made by the Iraqi Government to promote the national reconciliation plan and the Baghdad security plan. We welcome the fact that Iraqi forces are gradually assuming responsibility for security in substantial areas of the country thanks to the progress being made in the training of the Iraqi security forces by the Multinational Force. Furthermore, Japan appreciates the growing ability of those two forces to work together to ensure security in the country.

We welcome the fact that the Iraqi Government played a lead role in convening the conference on national reconciliation in Baghdad, recognizing the need for regional support to achieve peace and stability in the country. We welcome also the initiative and efforts of the Arab League for the convening of a conference on Iraqi national accord.

In addition, we welcome, as another positive step, the visit of Prime Minister Al-Maliki of Iraq to some of the neighbouring countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Iran, with a view to ensuring good-neighbourliness and stability in the country and the region.

Japan fully supports the International Compact with Iraq. We support the strong role that the United Nations, through UNAMI, has been playing as co-chair of the Compact process. Japan hopes that the Compact will be finalized and adopted by the end of this year.

After determining that the expected goals had been achieved, with the formation of the new Government in Iraq, Japan concluded its humanitarian and reconstruction support activities through the deployment of its Self-Defence Force contingents as part of the Multinational Force. Japan, however, maintains its commitment and engagement to provide the needed support in Iraq, mainly in the following three areas.

The first area is airlift support activities through Japan's air Self-Defence Force assets, for the benefit of the United Nations and the Multinational Force. We are pleased to report that the airlift services for the transportation of United Nations personnel and cargo began recently, and we hope that it will be useful in supporting the expansion of UNAMI's presence and its activities inside Iraq.

The second area is support for Iraqi reconstruction. To date, various projects worth $1.5 billion in grant aid have been completed, mainly for reconstruction of basic infrastructure and improvement of security. Additional aid of up to $3.5 billion through a soft loan window, largely for further improvement of infrastructure and other economic and social projects, is in the pipeline for steady implementation.

The third and final area involves engagement in the Iraq Compact. We believe that the success of this process requires the following three elements: first, that the Iraqi Government should assume full ownership of the process and clearly articulate its national vision; secondly, major donors and regional partners should be fully engaged in the Compact, so that the broader international community can assist Iraq effectively and in close partnership and coordination; and, thirdly, a framework should be established under the Compact that will set tangible goals towards political and economic stability.

To that end, Japan will continue to actively and continuously engage itself in the Compact process, in cooperation with the United Nations and other parties.

Japan's policy on support and assistance to Iraq was conveyed recently to Prime Minister Al-Maliki and Foreign Minister Zebari by Foreign Minister Aso during his visit to Baghdad last month.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Japan stands ready to continue to work with the people and the Government of Iraq and the rest of the international community so that Iraq can overcome its present difficulties and make strides towards becoming a democratic and stable State.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Greece.

I, too, would like to thank Mr. Qazi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Iraq and for presenting the Secretary-General's latest report on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). I should like also to thank Ambassador John Bolton for having provided us with an update on the activities of the Multinational Force in Iraq.

The Secretary-General's report and Ambassador Qazi's briefing are a stark reminder that a great deal remains to be done in Iraq. Indeed, we see that the significant achievements of the political transition process have not yet been translated into an improved security and human rights situation. The levels of violence in Iraq and their devastating toll on the civilian population is cause for alarm.

The Government of Iraq, with the help of the international community and with the constructive support of its neighbours, should do all it can to address the needs of the Iraqi people, in terms of both living conditions and also, and more importantly, of safeguarding their security and fundamental human rights.

We fully support the tremendous work that is being done by Ambassador Qazi and by the United Nations in Iraq and are aware of the very difficult circumstances within which they are operating. We agree with many of the observations contained in the Secretary-General's report and concur with the recommendations contained therein regarding the role of the United Nations in Iraq.

Greece will continue to support Iraq's efforts, both bilaterally and through the European Union, and will work towards the establishment of a peaceful, stable, democratic, pluralist and unified Iraq in which there is full respect for human rights and the rule of law.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ashraf Qazi, for his presentation and Ambassador Bolton for his report on behalf of the Multinational Force. I thank also the members of the Council for their statements regarding the situation in Iraq.

At the outset, allow me to express the appreciation of the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people for the efforts of the United Nations, through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ashraf Qazi, and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in providing humanitarian assistance in the field of development and reconstruction. We value the important role of UNAMI and its assistance in promoting the success of the political and constitutional process in Iraq, which ended with the election of a constitutional Government that is to lead Iraq for the next four years.

Based on the important role of UNAMI, the Iraqi Government had requested the extension of its mandate, and on 10 August 2006 the Security Council adopted resolution 1700 (2006), which extended the mandate of UNAMI for another year. The Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people still need the efforts of the Mission, and we look forward to seeing a vital role for UNAMI during the next constitutional review in enhancing the dialogue and national reconciliation and in developing the Iraqi election institutions. That would require an effective presence of the United Nations and an increase in its working staff in Iraq. We continue to believe that the number of United Nations staff members working in Iraq is too low, despite our understanding of the reasons underlying the hesitation of the United Nations.

With the full formation of the elected Iraqi Government on 8 June 2006, Iraq has entered a new phase, having achieved a milestone in the political and constitutional process, pursuant to the time frame determined by resolution 1546 (2004). The Iraqi Government has determined that its priority is to confront the enormous challenges in the political, economic and security fields. Due to the fact that those fields are strongly interrelated, it is not possible to focus on one field while overlooking the others. The

Iraqi Government therefore decided without any hesitation to address those fields on equal footing.

In the political field, the Iraqi Government believes that the political process should be comprehensive and should include all components of Iraqi society. The Government announced on 25 June 2006 a National Reconciliation Plan aimed at addressing the most important issues that are preventing the achievement of internal peace. It will secure the integration of the entire Iraqi people and all its entities into the core of the political process. The Government has established the High Committee for National Reconciliation to meet that responsibility and to provide all the requirements necessary for its success.

In the security field, and parallel to the process of national reconciliation, the Iraqi Government has adopted a security plan which aims at securing the capital, Baghdad. Iraqi forces, with the support of the Multinational Force, are responsible for implementing the plan. The past 30 days have witnessed a decrease in the level of violence and crime in comparison to the two months of June and July 2006.

As for development and reconstruction, it is necessary to give more importance to the International Compact with Iraq. The Iraqi Government has requested the support of the United Nations in that regard, because the International Compact is based on a sustainable partnership between the Iraqi Government and the international community in overcoming the challenges that emerged during the political and economic transitional phase.

Iraq expects a commitment from the international community to provide the resources required to address the main priorities. Iraq also requires the support of the international community to rebuild its economy and link it to the regional and international economy. That would assist Iraq in achieving its national perspective during the next five years. According to the Compact, Iraq is committed to combat corruption, to establish an effective and transparent oil sector and to enhance its national institutions. Towards that end, a preparatory group has been established, co-chaired by Iraq and the United Nations, to prepare for a high-level international conference to endorse the partnership and secure its fulfilment. The preparatory group met on 10 September in Abu Dhabi.

The Secretary-General will hold a meeting for the ministers of foreign affairs of the concerned countries on 18 September to review progress in the implementation of resolution 1546 (2004), and to review the development of the International Compact with Iraq. During that meeting, Iraq will present its national perspective within the framework of the International Compact. The Compact will add additional obligations for UNAMI and the agencies operating in Iraq. There is no doubt that the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq and the donors will play a fundamental role in assisting the Government of Iraq to achieve its national perspective.

My Government believes that the International Compact with Iraq provides an opportunity for donor countries to fulfil the commitments which they have taken upon themselves at the Madrid and other conferences. We urge the friendly and brotherly countries that have not yet supported the reconstruction of Iraq to do so through initiatives to support the International Compact with Iraq.

Much has been said lately of Iraq sliding into a civil war. We must admit that Iraq witnessed an increase in violent activities and sectarian tension during the period prior to the launching of the security plan that was adopted by the Iraqi Government. Those criminal acts might have caused a kind of internal displacement, which, in fact, is the objective of the terrorists and the remnants of the previous regime who seek the failure of the building of a new democratic Iraqi State based on good governance and respect for human rights.

The aim of the terrorists is to return to the dictatorship period and to confiscate the freedom of the Iraqi people. However, the Government and the people of Iraq are determined to defeat the terrorists. Those who are familiar with the heritage, social solidarity and interrelated familial ties among the components of Iraqi society will realize that the terrorist objective is not achievable. The Iraqi people have succeeded in recent years in completing the political and constitutional process, despite the difficult circumstances. They will also succeed in their battle for dialogue, national reconciliation and the defeat of the terrorists, and in maintaining their unity.

The report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2006/706) refers to the critical crisis in human rights in Iraq, which has also been referred to

by several human rights organizations and the media. The reports have received careful attention from my Government, as well as from the political and religious leadership in Iraq.

Yes, there have been several incidents that prove the violation of human rights in Iraq, but we believe that we should look at them within the context of the security situation as a whole. Those incidents do not indicate, by any means, a systematic violation; rather, they are individual, separate incidents that take place due to the sectarian tension in the country. The Government of Iraq is attempting to put an end to those incidents, investigate the causes and bring the perpetrators to justice. Finally, we have to take into consideration the fact that the political leaders and the Iraqi people in all sectors were victims of grave systematic violations of human rights during the previous regime. That fact would certainly compel the Government to put the issue of the promotion and protection of human rights in Iraq at the top of its priorities.

Let me conclude by saying that, while we commend the role of the United Nations in Iraq through UNAMI and have requested the extension of the Mission's mandate, Iraq is still bound by other mandates, the justification of which no longer exists due to changes in the circumstances that led to their establishment. Here, I refer to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Thus, we believe, along with many others, including all the members of the Security Council, that the time has come to revisit or review the mandate of UNMOVIC with the objective of ending it fully.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Mr. Qazi to respond to comments that have been made.

Mr. Qazi: First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the representatives of countries members of the Security Council and of the Government of Iraq for their very constructive contributions, and for their very encouraging remarks with regard to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

I would like to say that we are at a very critical time. It is always a critical time in Iraq, but right now the possibilities for progress in a challenging environment are there, and we need to avail ourselves of them. It is true that many achievements of the benchmarks of resolution 1546 (2004) — in fact, they were all achieved — have not yet translated into the security situation that we all aspire to achieve. But the newly elected Government, headed by Prime Minister al-Maliki, has indeed taken a number of extremely important initiatives, not least, the National Reconciliation Plan and the decision to launch, in partnership with the United Nations, the International Compact with Iraq.

Those are comprehensive initiatives and it is our privilege to be associated with them — with the National Reconciliation Plan and the individual programmes that comprise it, including the Baghdad peace initiative and the International Compact with Iraq.

The first preparatory group meeting, which took place in Abu Dhabi recently, was a very constructive event. We look forward to the high-level meeting on 18 September, to enable a broader range of participation from countries which were not at Abu Dhabi and whose views will be valued and taken into account.

There is no doubt that the major challenge that confronts Iraq today is the degree of violence which comes from a number of sources — the sectarian violence, insurgency and terrorist violence, and, indeed, organized criminal violence. Collectively, they add up to an extremely challenging environment, to put it mildly, for the average Iraqi in those areas where this violence is particularly acute. I say that because one often loses sight that there are many areas in Iraq which, mercifully, are free from significant levels of violence. Nonetheless, the fact that this violence does affect Baghdad impacts upon the perceptions with respect to Iraq. The United Nations will always be ready to lend support, at the request of the Government of Iraq and with the support of the international community as expressed by the Security Council, and to continue its work.

We are now under the extended mandate which includes responsibilities for the International Compact, looking for the realization of an Iraqi national vision which will entail its transformation and integration into the global and regional economy. The regional countries will have a critically important role here. It is very encouraging to see the emphasis that has been placed on this fact and on the extremely important role that regional countries and organizations like the

League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have to play with respect to future developments in Iraq.

The United Nations was proud to assist the League of Arab States in its preparatory conference in Cairo last November and will continue to associate itself with those efforts.

It remains for me to thank all participants for their constructive comments and advice. I would like also to thank the Government of Iraq for all the assistance that it has extended to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) in order to make our work possible. I would also like to thank all the member countries of the Multinational Force in Iraq, which have also enabled us to do our work in Iraq. We also wish to thank the Governments of Japan and of Denmark, which have assisted us with respect to aircraft, because mobility has been an issue which has hampered us. Their contributions are valued and appreciated and will facilitate our work.

The President: I thank Mr. Qazi for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.